

T. Paul Rainey

21st March 1946 - 9th January 2023

Paul Rainey will be a familiar face to many GA Members as he was a GA Member since 1962. He was a schoolboy at the time and apparently sometimes proudly came to meetings in his Cadet Corps uniform. He subsequently worked abroad but at least since the 1990s has been a regular attendee at the GA monthly lecture meetings.

Paul's work with the London Geodiversity Partnership

Paul has been an invaluable member of the London Geodiversity Partnership since its inception in 2008. In conjunction with the Greater London Authority, the BGS, Natural England and a number of other 'partners'. Paul, as one of the members of South London RIGS, was responsible for suggesting possible Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), worthy of protection in south London. Both he and Vernon Marks were very active at this time in helping to select sites in 2007 and 2008 for the first edition of London's Foundations published in 2009.

In the early days Paul facilitated the finances of the Partnership through the Ravensbourne Geological Society for whom he was treasurer, but when that sadly folded in 2014, LGP set about becoming properly constituted. Paul agreed to become the Treasurer at the inaugural meeting in February 2015 when David Brook was the Chairman. Dave reports: *As the Chair of LGP, I found Paul very easy to work with and was pleased that he volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer. He did absolutely sterling work, overcoming the difficulties of opening a bank account for LGP, requiring us to formally adopt a constitution and procedures to satisfy the bank. He was always willing to help and put a great deal of effort into all he did. Certainly, his knowledge of South London geology and related issues, including industrial archaeology, was outstanding.*

Many of the LGP sites were first recommended by Paul; he had a wide knowledge of London's geology, not only in the southeast (he lived in Bromley). He was particularly interested in the hydrogeology and worked out routes for numerous geotrails on which he led members of the Partnership. Gradually LGP began to present these to the public and some of them are written up and are on the LGP website, in particular the Thames Path, Richmond Park and the anomalous River Neckinger, associated with the Rockingham Anomaly. One geotrail, researched entirely by Paul was the Sydenham and Dulwich Geotrail of Spas, Springs & Wells which was presented to the public for Earth Science week in 2015. This has been completed and is publicly available on the LGP website as a fitting memorial to Paul.

Paul undertook a huge amount of research for these projects both on the internet and in local archives. He walked the routes himself, found borehole data for cross-sections. He was the professional who kept other members of the LGP on the straight and narrow – he will be greatly missed by all of us.

Paul's work with the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society

It was during 1978 whilst in the UK that Paul joined the Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society. During his first few years of membership he was largely working abroad but by 1987 he was contributing talks to the society and participating in field trips. By 1996 he was joint Secretary of the Geology Section, and in 2002 he became a much-valued member of CNHSS Council. In 2003 he became the Treasurer, a post he held until 2018. Across his years with CNHSS his walks included: *On the stones of Croydon; From the Thames Barrier to the fossil pits at Abbey Wood; From Coombe Conduit across Richmond Park to the river; and The history of water in Richmond.* His talks included 'South London Spas', following a related walk in the Epsom area, and 'Weighing the Earth'. He was an authority on geological and hydrogeological matters and we know that our late Director and fellow geologist Paul Sowan used to greatly appreciate Paul's knowledge and their discussions. In 2020 Paul Rainey left CNHSS Council but we were glad that he was able to attend the opening event of our delayed 150th Anniversary celebrations at the Old Palace Croydon in April 2022.

Early and professional life

Paul was born in South Africa and spent his early years in Nairobi, Kenya. He had a younger sister who had been born in England and a baby brother born in Nairobi. His father was a scientist concerned with forecasting the weather and hence the movement of swarms of locusts. The desert locust moves around with the monsoon rains anywhere from East Africa, through the Middle East to India. It made good sense for all the countries in that area to co-operate in tracking and keeping the swarms small and so preventing the major 'biblical' swarms emerging out of the unknown and then impossible to control. His father was a big influence on Paul.



**Paul at Gunnersbury Park in August 2022.
Photo Ruth Siddall**

At age eight, after his sister had died from polio, and from which he was recovering, the family travelled back to England on the slow boat for six weeks calling at all the ports round southern Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, as well as the Islands of Ascension and Saint Helena. This was clearly exciting for a young boy. They settled in Pinner in Middlesex and he attended school at Harrow Hill.

Paul studied geology at Newcastle Upon Tyne, which was one of the centres most closely involved with the development of Plate Tectonics. A significant event in those days was the Aberfan Disaster – a terrible disaster that could, and should, have been avoided if due attention had been paid to the geology.

On graduating in 1968, Paul worked as part of the British Overseas Aid effort in exploring for Lead and Zinc, and cement raw materials. He later returned to Kenya working for Balfour Beatty, involved in the design and construction of a hydro-electric project on the Tana River. This included an earth-fill dam, an underground power station and 7km of shafts and tunnels in hard rock. In 1978, he returned to England just long enough to find and move into his Bromley flat. But it was back to Kenya for a further year or so to investigate another power station site.

In 1981 he crossed the Andes for the first time to work on a hydroelectric project close to Santiago in Chile, in a valley once travelled up by Darwin. He spent a few weeks as a tourist following as close as possible the route followed by Charles Darwin during his Voyage on the Beagle. Whilst in Peru in 1982 on another major project, he was flown back to England with leukaemia. There followed nine months of five rounds of drastic chemotherapy at Hammersmith Hospital. After that it was back to work, returning to Peru visiting 17 potential small hydro-electric stations, widespread over the whole country.

In 1986 Paul was on a small survey ship looking at details of the geology to refine the designs for the Channel Tunnel. But he suffered his first epileptic seizure on that boat, which curtailed his geological activities for a while. In 1992, after his illness, he first joined the Quakers and was a regular attendee at their meetings. In fact, Paul had attended a meeting just two days before he died.

Paul joined Austin Lockwood in the early 1990s, a very enthusiastic fossil and mineral collector, and with other people they founded and ran the Ravensbourne Geological Society. At an early stage Austin identified blocks of 2000 million-year-old gneiss in NW Scotland. Twenty of these blocks were carried down to Bromley and installed in prominent green spaces throughout the borough to mark the millennium. In addition small lumps of rock were given to all 45,000 schoolchildren in the borough. These large boulders appear to have survived well, little affected by vandalism. The group ran field trips, a lecture programme and at its peak two Saturday morning events every month for children.

Paul was recently engaged on helping members of LGP pinpoint the 20 Millennium rocks placed around Bromley. These have now been located, photographed, described and will be made publicly available on the LGP website.



Drinking from a fresh coconut while working in Kenya, 1970.
Photo Rod Rainey

Outside the Ravensbourne Geological Society Paul became closely involved in geological conservation issues throughout London. His particular interest was in the bournes and spas of valleys such as the Ravensbourne and Wandle. He promoted many wells such as St Blaise's Well in the grounds of Bromley's Bishops Palace, which was once marketed as a stronger rival to Tunbridge Wells with much easier access to London. He also researched the Epsom Salts produced on Shooters Hill, and Ladywell in Lewisham, which was a source of good drinking water.

Paul was at one time the Treasurer of eight different small charitable groups and remarked that '*shedding those roles has proved rather more difficult than volunteering*'. Paul remained Treasurer of LGP when he died, another of his roles that we are going to find hard to fill.

He was also an active member of Bromley Friends of the Earth. Another group that continued his long interest in the good environment of the world. Their February newsletter has a lovely obituary of Paul.

Paul's Memorial Meeting at the Friends Meeting House in Bromley on 8th March 2023 was packed. It was a fascinating event with representatives of all the various groups that Paul had been involved with coming together and speaking and learning about other sides of his life. Paul was a very quiet man and did not speak much about himself. We knew about his epilepsy but not about his other major illnesses and interests. It was a privilege to have known him.

In 1988 he obtained an MSc in Engineering Geology at Imperial College, University of London. Glowing tributes from his two supervisors Mike De Freitas and Mike Rosenbaum have been received.

Reference: Rainey, T. P. & Rosenbaum, M. S., 1989. The adverse influence of geology and groundwater on the behaviour of London Underground railway tunnels near Old Street station. *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, **100**, 123–134.

Compiled by Diana Clements (LGP) from contributions provided by Roderick Rainey (Paul's brother), Mike de Freitas, Mike Rosenbaum, David Brook & Carole Roberts.